

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 11-13, 15 and 17-23 are pending in this application. Claim 12 is currently withdrawn from consideration. By this Amendment, claims 1, 18 and 19 are amended and claims 14 and 16 are canceled. Support for amended claim 1 may be found in the original specification at, for example, claim 14. No new matter is added.

Reconsideration of the Application is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Pham at the interview held September 18, 2007 are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

Applicants gratefully appreciate the indication that claims 13-15 and 17-22 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action included the following rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a):

- (1) claims 1-4 relying upon JP 6-67102 ("Tomita") in view of JP 63-14331 ("Ishida");
- (2) claim 5 relying upon Tomita in view of Ishida, further in view of JP 2000-249957 ("Yanagisawa");
- (3) claim 6 relying upon Tomita in view of Ishida, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,469,772 ("Itabashi");
- (4) claims 7-9 relying upon Tomita in view of Ishida, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,490,158 ("Mogi '158"); and
- (5) claim 11 relying upon Tomita in view of Ishida, further in view of Yanagisawa and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,992,690 ("Mogi '690").

In light of the amended claims, all of the above rejections are moot. In particular, claim 1 is amended to include the features of allowable claim 14, and claims 14 and 16 are canceled.

Accordingly, claim 1, and dependent claims thereof, are patentable over the applied references. Thus, withdrawal and reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

Rejoinder

Further, in response to a previous Restriction Requirement, claim 12 was withdrawn. However, in light of the now allowable claim 1, Applicants respectfully request that dependent claim 12 be rejoined and similarly allowed.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-9, 11-13, 15 and 17-23 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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